

Swedenborgian Church
876 Middle Street
Bath
Sagadahoc County
Maine

HABS No. ME-151

HABS
ME.

12 BATH

3-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ME-151
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SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

Location: 876 Middle Street, northwest corner at Winter Street,
Bath, Sagadahoc County, Maine

Present Owner
and Occupant: First Parish of the New Jerusalem Church in Bath

Present Use: Church

Statement of
Significance: The Swedenborgian Church of Bath has used this wooden
one-and-a-half story Greek Revival temple continuous-
ly throughout its history.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1843
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an in-
complete chain of title. Lincoln County Registry of Deeds,
first deed only, and Sagadahoc County Registry of Deeds.

1850 Deed. November 21, 1850.
Book 33, Page 289. (Lincoln County)
Zina Hyde, William D. Sewall, and John B. Swanton
to
Proprietors of the New Church Temple

1855 Deed. December 25, 1855.
Book 6, Page 139.
Zina Hyde, William D. Sewall, and John B. Swanton
to
Proprietors of the New Church Temple

1866 Deed. February 20, 1866.
Book 27, Page 409.
William D. Sewall, John B. Swanton, and the Trustees
of the Estate of Zina Hyde
to
Proprietors of the New Church Temple

1867 Deed. March 20, 1867.
Book 28, Page 335.
William D. Sewall, John B. Swanton, and Eleanor M. Hyde;
William D. Sewall and John B. Swanton,
Trustees of Zina Hyde
to
Proprietors of the New Church Temple

1871 Deed. March 16, 1871.
Book 35, Page 83.
Eleanor M. Hyde, Thomas W. Hyde, and Mary E. Hyde
to
Proprietors of the New Church Temple, for the Bath
Society of the New Jerusalem

1875 Deed. January 5, 1875.
Book 43, Page 49.
Proprietors of the New Church Temple, the Bath Society
of the New Jerusalem Church, John B. Swanton, William
D. Sewall, Eleanor M. Hyde, Thomas W. Hyde, and Mary
E. Hyde
to
First Parish of the New Jerusalem Church in Bath

1875 Deed. January 5, 1875.
Book 44, Page 101.
John C. Jameson, W. V. Moses, C. B. Lemont, L. P.
Lemont, Daniel Larrabee, Mitchell L. Trott, Sarah
A. Randall, Clara M. Owen, Emma M. Patten, H. W.
Owen, F. E. Owen, A. B. Farnham, and William E. Payne
to
First Parish of the New Jerusalem Church in Bath

4. Builder: Unknown. Directed by Zina Hyde (1787-1856).

5. Alterations and additions: On March 1, 1920, the Swedenborgian Church collapsed, due to a great accumulation of snow on the roof. The church members decided to rebuild the church, making it smaller. Under the direction of William D. Sewall, Charles H. Hacker of Brunswick, Maine, was hired to do the rebuilding in 1920.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Stereoptican view and 1920 photograph in the collection of the Bath Marine Museum, Bath, Maine.
2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds. Lincoln County Registry of Deeds, High Street,
Wiscasset, Maine 04578.

Deeds. Sagadahoc County Registry of Deeds, 752 High
Street, Bath, Maine 04530.

Recollections of Zina Hyde of Bath 1787-1856, typescript,
written by Frank Sewall, May 18, 1904, in the collection
of the First Parish of the New Jerusalem Church in Bath,
Bath, Maine.

Swedenborgian Records 1874-1943, in the collection of the
First Parish of the New Jerusalem Church in Bath,
Bath, Maine.

Letter from Walter S. Glidden, Counsellor at Law, to
Mr. William D. Sewall, Bath, March 30, 1920, in the
collection of the First Parish of the New Jerusalem
Church in Bath, Bath, Maine.

b. Secondary and published sources: None

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This rectangular one-and-a-half
story wooden church was built in the Greek Revival style
with a temple front. Windows are recessed along the sides.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The church is 40 feet wide, 70 feet
deep, and about 35 feet high to the roof eaves.
2. Foundations: Granite
3. Wall construction: Wood with wooden trim
4. Trim and finish: The front wall of the church is recessed
about 10 feet behind an open colonnade consisting of four
fluted Doric columns which support a triangular pediment
and wide entablature. Four pilasters with recessed panels,
located directly behind the columns, divide the front wall
into three bays. In the center bay is an entrance door;
the side bays are solid. The entablature on which the pedi-
ment rests runs continuously around the entire church.

The rear wall has a pediment, supported by four pilasters with recessed panels. The center bay is solid; each side bay contains a double window. This present appearance of the rear wall is the result of the 1920 rebuilding. Originally the rear wall had a gable roof projection, about 20 feet wide and 15 feet deep, in the center. The projection rose to the cornice at the bottom of the pediment. It had corner pilasters, an entablature, and a pediment identical to those of the church, only of a smaller scale. There were no openings in the rear wall or projection.

The side walls of the church were originally divided into seven bays--a narrow bay at either end and five equal bays in the center--by pilasters with recessed panels. The second, fourth, and sixth bays contained double windows. When the church was rebuilt in 1920, the side walls were altered to make the church narrower. Today the center five bays of the side wall are recessed about five feet behind an open colonnade formed by square columns with recessed panels in each face. The center three bays contain double windows; the other two bays contain single windows.

All the wall surfaces are finished with horizontal matched boards.

5. Chimneys: There is one simple brick chimney which pierces the roof ridge near the rear of the church.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance on the facade is a double wooden door. Each door has four lights and two molded panels at the bottom. The door architrave is flat with a raised square band on the perimeter; the lintel is slightly triangular on top.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The original windows were recessed in the 1920 rebuilding and other windows made to match them. Each is a tall, narrow window, double hung with eight-light sashes. The windows have flat trim.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is shingled in asphalt.
 - b. Cornice: The cornice has a flat lower part and a molded upper part. It runs continuously along the entire roof. The lower part crosses both gable ends of the building above the entablature; with the raking cornice it defines the pediments. The continuous wide, flat entablature is divided near the middle with a narrow projecting molding.

8. Stairs: Wooden stairs lead up to the floor of the facade colonnade.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The church has a narrow vestibule across the full width of its eastern end. The sanctuary occupies the center of the church: two rows of pews with a center aisle face the altar at the western end. The altar stands in an arched recess; to either side is a small room. Suspended from the eastern sanctuary wall is a narrow choir balcony.
2. Stairways: Stairs in the vestibule lead to the choir balcony. The altar is raised, approached by three wide stairs from the sanctuary.
3. Flooring: Hardwood floors throughout
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The plaster walls and ceilings are painted. The sanctuary ceiling was originally flat; it was rebuilt as a gentle vault in 1920.
5. Doors: Double doors lead from the vestibule to the sanctuary. A single door to either side of the altar recess leads to the room behind. All the doors are wooden with two panels set well in from molded styles and rails.
6. Trim: All trim is wooden, painted. A chair rail and a molded baseboard run continuously around the sanctuary walls. The single door moldings are broken out at the top. The windows have slatted shutters.
7. Choir balcony: The choir balcony is supported by four heavy carved brackets which extend from wall pilasters with recessed rectangular panels. The center pilasters frame the entrance door. The balcony itself is divided by four pilasters with bases which rest on a continuous molded cornice. Between the pilasters, half round carved balusters, projecting from a flat surface, support a handrail.

The wall above the balcony was altered in the 1920 rebuilding. Originally a molded arch contained delicate wooden lattices. Now the arch is unmolded. It contains four pilasters which support a flat entablature and molded cornice. The center pilasters are topped by carved urns. The pilasters define three bays which are open for their upper half, exposing organ pipes, and contain wooden panels and paneled wooden double doors in their lower half.

8. Altar: The arched altar enclosure contains an altar and lectern. They are of dark stained wood and have flat pilasters with carved brackets, molded and fluted panels, and wide flat bases.
9. Pews: The wooden pews are painted. The carved back and arm rest trim is stained dark.
10. Lighting: Electric

D. Site:

The Swedenborgian Church stands in the center of a large lot on which there are no other buildings. The church is approached by a walk from Middle Street which bisects a lawn enclosed by hedges. Surrounding the church on the three remaining sides are mature trees.

Prepared by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.
and
Mary-Eliza Wengren
September 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during 1971 and 1972 in the course of a photo-data project in the cities of Bath, Hallowell, Monmouth, and Richmond in the State of Maine. The project was arranged in response to the initiative of Mrs. Linda B. Clark of Row House, Inc., in Hallowell, Dr. Charles E. Burden of the Bath Marine Museum, Mrs. Paul L. Roberts of the Richmond Historical and Cultural Society, and Mr. H. Earle Flanders of Monmouth. All of these preservationists actively solicited or contributed funds and effectively fostered increased interest in the architectural heritage of their respective communities. The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, at that time Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey; was supervised in the field by Denys Peter Myers, then Principal Architectural Historian of HABS; was carried on by Student Architectural Historian Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Boston University; and was continued by Alan Mast, Maine Arts and Humanities Commission, and Mary-Eliza Wengren (Mrs. Richard E., Jr.), Maine Historic Preservation Commission, under the field supervision of Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Photographers were Mark C. Bisgrove, Sylvester Cobbs, Stanley Schwartz, Leon P. Shepard, and Richard Dwight Sturgis.